



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Member Organizations

**The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services**
Ansonia, CT

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport, CT

**The Center for Empowerment
and Education**
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program
United Services**
Dayville, CT

**Network Against Domestic
Abuse**
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services
Greenwich YWCA**
Greenwich, CT

Interval House
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence
Services**
Meriden, CT

New Horizons
Middletown, CT

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for
Domestic Violence Services**
New Haven, CT

Safe Futures
New London, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk, CT

Women's Support Services
Sharon, CT

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Stamford, CT

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington, CT

Safe Haven
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program
United Services**
Willimantic, CT

Testimony Regarding

HB 5037, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023

Department of Housing Budget

Appropriations Committee February 16, 2022

Good evening Senators Osten, Hartley & Somers, Representatives Walker, Gibson & Ferraro, and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who serve them. Our members provide essential services to nearly 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, housing advocacy and resources, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding the state budget and the challenges facing domestic violence victims and their children throughout the state.

CCADV is a member of the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. Domestic violence remains the leading cause of homelessness among women and children in the United States, and this has only been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. Victims often face discrimination in accessing housing and are limited in the locations and types of housing they can access because of their unique safety and confidentiality needs. Additionally, with rent increasing in Connecticut by 12% over the past year, the highly competitive housing market makes it increasingly difficult for victims to secure affordable housing, especially housing in their current neighborhood where they feel at home, where their children currently attend school, and where they are close to their support system. When a victim cannot find safe, affordable housing, they are more likely to remain or return to living with their abuser.

Experiencing housing instability has a detrimental impact on victims and their children. Victims and their children may struggle with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, disruptive behaviors at school and poor grades, as well as poor physical health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease due to chronic stress. Additionally, victims of color and victims with a criminal record are more likely to experience discrimination by landlords and face eviction.

Domestic violence shelters continue to operate well over capacity each year. Ongoing cross-system collaboration has been critical in securing housing resources for victims. In 2021, over 540 households within CCADV's domestic violence network were referred to one of CT's Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) for a housing resource. We urge the General Assembly to commit to preserving key investments in affordable housing, as well as support new initiatives that allow us to continue housing victims and their children, both during these unprecedented times and for years to come. We support these asks set forth by the Reaching Home Campaign:

- **Invest in Funding the Front Lines:** Support the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance long-term plan to restore at least \$461 million to community nonprofits, which includes housing and homeless service organizations.
- **Invest in Connecticut's Community Access Networks:** Provide an additional \$2.3 million in Department of Housing (DOH) Housing/Homeless Services line to provide critical staff infrastructure support to Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) and 2-1-1.

(OVER)

- **Increase Investments in Rental Assistance:** Increase DOH Housing/Homeless Services line by at least \$20 million in FY23 to expand the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), including \$2 million to provide rental assistance to 200 scattered-site supportive housing units for highly vulnerable individuals and families.
- **Create an Eviction Prevention Partnership:** Provide an additional \$2.5 million in DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line to establish and implement a proven eviction prevention model that leverages Right to Counsel legal services and couples them with high-quality social work to address vulnerable renter's needs.

We also urge support of Governor Lamont's proposed allocation of \$50 million in federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSFRF) to support and invest in the creation of 350 additional affordable housing units for households with incomes between 30% and 50% of area median income.

Thank you for your consideration.

Annie Stockton Sabrowski
Director of Housing Advocacy
CCADV
asabrowski@ctcadv.org